The actual ritual of these ceremonies did not take a great deal of time although it was important. Most of the time and effort went into preparing and serving food. Even a small celebration involved cooperative effort among relatives and friends. For every event, the Buddhist altar in the home was decorated and offerings were made to the house-spirit. A big cremation might require planning in detail for years ahead: invitations to priests and relatives in distant parts of the country; hiring an orchestra and obtaining ceremonial gear. For the largest events, when the guest lists ranged upward to 60 or so priests and 400 other guests, one borrowed the hundreds of trays, dishes and bowls owned by the temple. No rental fee was charged for these, but such items had to be returned the next day, clean, and damaged articles replaced or paid for. As the day or days drew near, boat-loads of fresh provender were bought at big markets, and organized cooperative cooking went on under the direction of a competent person, usually one of the "professional" cooks of the village. The day before one ordination, 33 women were seen preparing vegetables, fish and soup; 13 others were making 7 kinds of desserts; about 50 others of both sexes were at different tasks, the men in particular cooking Chinese noodles, grating coconut, stirring, stoking fires. The picture was one of rows of stoves, pots so large they were stirred with a boat paddle, buckets of sugar, eggs by the hundreds, a hired generator to run a mechanical coconut-grater. On this occasion two meals were served. At another splendid (1)ngaan, the priests were fed three meals, other guests up to eight meals, over a period of two and one-half days. Workers had received additional meals beforehand.

The banquet comprised rice and many dishes not met with in daily fare: Chinese noodles; "with-rice" dishes of several kinds, rich in fish, meat and vegetables: for example, fried chicken with internal organs, garlic and pepper; fried pork with mung bean; (2)mii (a fried vermicelli) with fish, vegetables, and a tomato sauce; many different desserts made of eggs, rice flour, glutinous rice, agar, coconut and coconut milk, sugar, sweet potato, dried green beans; flowers served in syrup, fresh fruit such as watermelon; ices and coffee.

In Appendix A, p. 102 is a list of foods bought for an annual homage-to-the-teacher rite. It is the nearest approximation to a quantitative record of food for a ceremony that the research group obtained. The prominence of purchased foods, especially of flesh foods, is noteworthy.

On the great day, the priests were served first, either at 7 a.m. or 11 a.m., or both, always at least in part by the host, who sat and chatted with them. No one else ate until